

JANUARY/  
FEBRUARY 2020

VOLUME 22  
NUMBER 1

# BCTGM *News*



**ORGANIZE.  
EDUCATE.  
STRENGTHEN.**

**#2020GOALS**





## BCTGM Provides Puerto Rico EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

**Puerto Rico is suffering from a recent wave of high-magnitude earthquakes and hundreds of tremors that have rattled the island over the past month, leaving the people and infrastructure devastated once again.**

On February 10, BCTGM Local 6 (Philadelphia) officers and members delivered 14,000 pounds of baked goods and snacks donated by union contracted companies Bimbo Bakeries USA and Keystone Foods to the Seafarers International Union (SIU) hall in Philadelphia. The union-made products were put into a shipping container at the union hall and transported to the port of Philadelphia where it was loaded onto a SIU-crewed tug/barge bound for San Juan.

“As soon as we got word that the labor movement was sending aid to help the people of Puerto Rico, we wanted to help,” notes Local 6 President Hank McKay

According to McKay, who led the Local 6 effort,



the local rented a U-Haul truck and picked up product at the union production facilities and transported it to SIU union hall. Phil Paturzo, Vice President of Labor Relations for Bimbo Bakeries USA, coordinated the effort on behalf of the company which provided a second truck to transport the hundreds of boxes filled with baked goods to the union hall.

Dan Duncan, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, reports that the Puerto Rico Ports Council is working with the local labor federation as well as a coalition of Seafarers, Teachers, Longshoremen, Teamsters, CWA, AFSCME, Laborers and other trade unionists to get food and materials to residents as quickly as possible. Methods include union members using their personal pickup trucks to deliver goods to outlying areas.

“Working with supportive companies like BIMBO and Keystone to provide goods to the earthquake victims with our SIU union brothers in Philadelphia – who made the entire process seamless – was amazing. This is what labor solidarity looks like,” concludes McKay.



**SIU San Juan, Puerto Rico Port Agent Amancio Crespo (left) and AFT National Representative Alfredo Chuquihuara prepare to distribute BCTGM-made products.**



**BCTGM Local 6, together with representatives from BIMBO BAKERIES USA, transported 14,000 pounds of union made products to the SIU Hall in Philadelphia from BCTGM bakeries in Pa.**

# QUAKER OATS Stew

**Shop stewards from the Quaker Oats facility in Danville, Ill. met for a one-day educational conference on January 28. The group of 30 Local 347G (Danville, Ill.) members were a mix of seasoned and newly elected stewards all eager to learn more about the duties and responsibilities of the job.**

The training was led by BCTGM Midwest Region Vice President Brad Schmidt and BCTGM Director of Research and Education Matthew Clark.

The conference began with a segment on the history and structure of the BCTGM, its role in the larger North American labor movement, and how to educate new members about the union. The group used role-playing as a way to illustrate different ways of approaching and talking to new members of the union.

The training also focused on labor laws that apply to union stewards, health and safety issues, new member



Thirty L. 347G stewards from the Danville, Ill. Quaker plant attended the educational conference in late January.



Jorica Rapier (left) and Amanda Winland (right).



BCTGM Midwest Region Vice President Brad Schmidt

# Stewards EAGER to Learn

orientation, dealing with management and supervisors, and communication strategies.

BCTGM Local 347G Recording-Secretary Tyler Bennett led a segment on the grievance procedure, outlining the timelines, how to properly fill in a grievance form, and some “Do’s and Don’ts” when investigating grievances.

According to Schmidt, it is vitally important for new stewards to learn from those who have years of experience. “New stewards are sometimes intimidated about all the roles that they have to play as a union

steward, but the more senior stewards can really help them learn how to manage these responsibilities,” said Schmidt. In 2019, Local 347G negotiated a new five-year contract with the company.

The Quaker Oats Company built the Danville facility in 1969. In 2000, Quaker Oats was acquired by Pepsico, which also owns Frito Lay and Gatorade.

The Danville facility employs approximately 500 BCTGM members who produce Cap’n Crunch, Quaker Oat Squares, Quaker Natural Granola, Aunt Jemima pancake mixes and Chewy Granola bars.



**Learning how to “talk union” with new workers is an important part of a steward’s job. Role-playing helps stewards become comfortable communicating.**



**Throughout the training, new stewards learned from more seasoned stewards.**



**Quaker stewards spent the one-day training reviewing the rights and responsibilities of shop stewards.**



**Stewards Mellissa Brandon (left) and Eric Bridgewater participate in a role playing exercise designed to help worker-to-worker communication.**



## House Passes Landmark PRO Act to Strengthen Unions and Labor Rights

Our economy is out of balance. Corporations and CEOs hold too much power and wealth, and working people know it. Workers are mobilizing, organizing, protesting, and striking at a level not seen in decades, and they are winning pay raises and other real change by using their collective voices.

But, the fact is, it is still too difficult for working people to form a union at their workplace when they want to. The law gives employers too much power and puts too many roadblocks in the way of workers trying to organize with their co-workers. That's why the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act—which passed the U.S. House in early February—is the most significant step toward strengthening labor laws in the United States in more than 85 years.

America's labor laws are no longer an effective means for working people to have our voices heard. The long overdue PRO Act will provide significant protections for workers exercising their legal right to form a union, a right that's been trampled on for decades by union-busting consultants and anti-worker politicians.

In a press release following the vote, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said, "The PRO Act is the labor movement's number one legislative priority this year for a reason. Working people are hungry for a bill that will ensure a process for reaching a first contract once a union is recognized, prevent the misclassification of employees, protect the right to strike and so much else.

America is ready for more unions; and a happier, healthier and upwardly mobile workforce will

help reverse the inequality of income, opportunity and power that is threatening our families, our communities and our democracy."

House lawmakers voted mostly along party lines to approve the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act (H.R.2474), which passed 224–194 with 12 members not voting.

A study published in the National Bureau of Economic Research found that unions have consistently provided workers with a 10- to 20-percent wage boost over their non-union counterparts over the past eight decades.

### The PRO Act protects workers' right to organize by:

- ▶ Authorizing meaningful penalties for employers that violate workers' right to organize,
- ▶ Strengthening and streamlining support for workers who face retaliation for exercising their rights,
- ▶ Helping workers secure a first contract,
- ▶ Making union elections free and fair by creating stronger protections for workers who want to organize,
- ▶ And closing loopholes that allow companies to misclassify workers as independent contractors.

# Labor Fights to Make USMCA Better than NAFTA

**The BCTGM, along with the AFL-CIO and affiliated unions, praised the revised U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) that was passed by the Democratic-controlled U.S. House of Representatives in December 2019 as a major improvement over the original pact signed by President Donald Trump and the leaders of Mexico and Canada earlier in 2019.**

The new trade pact includes the Brown-Wyden amendment that prohibits companies from shipping product from Mexico to the American market if they are in violation of labor laws.

The BCTGM has been highly critical of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as companies in the food processing industry have taken advantage of Mexico's cheap labor and lax labor and health and safety laws to undercut American and Canadian workers. NAFTA has cost many thousands of BCTGM members their jobs over the last 25 years.

In a statement following the vote, BCTGM International President David Durkee commended House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, House Ways and Means Committee Chair Richard Neal, and Senators Sherrod Brown and Ron Wyden for their tireless efforts to ensure that the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is a victory for American workers.

"They truly are champions for American workers and stood strong throughout this long process as the labor movement continued to demand a truly enforceable trade agreement," reflected Durkee.

Durkee added that the renegotiated trade agreement is significantly better than NAFTA and enormously improved from the original proposal from the Trump Administration.

The USMCA is the first major trade deal backed by the AFL-CIO. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said it was just the first step in undoing the damage of NAFTA that went into effect in 1994.

"We demanded a trade deal that benefits workers and fought every single day to negotiate that deal; and now we have secured an agreement that working people can proudly support," said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

The AFL-CIO estimates the United States has lost 851,700 jobs to Mexico because of NAFTA. The U.S. goods trade deficit with Mexico was \$80.7 billion in 2018, compared with a \$1.7 billion surplus in 1993, thanks in part to U.S. companies moving manufacturing operations south of the border.

Under the rewritten deal, if Mexico fails in its labor reform program, U.S. enforcement actions will be triggered. A U.S. labor committee will monitor Mexico's progress, and if the nation fails to achieve certain benchmarks, there will be punitive action.

# Stewards Renew Skills, Sharpen Knowledge

**Stewards in Tennessee, Georgia and Virginia concluded 2019 with educational seminars that helped the union leaders sharpen their skills and knowledge leading into the New Year.**

For BCTGM stewards in Richmond, Va., International Representative Randy Fulk led a one-day program at the Local 203T (Richmond) union hall. The union members focused on



▲ Intl. Rep. Randy Fulk leads L. 203T stewards in a discussion of the union contract in Richmond, Va.

▼ L. 25 stewards from Tyson's Foods in Rome, Ga. refreshed skills during the program that was led by retired local union officers Tommy Kelly, Larry Altman together with L. 25 Bus. Agt./Fin. Secy. Jeff Webb.



grievance handling, communicating with members on the shop floor, workplace health and safety and collective bargaining.

Local 25 (Chattanooga, Tenn.) stewards from the Kellogg's and Tyson Foods plants in Rome, Ga. focused on reviewing the rights and responsibilities of shop stewards in the workplace. Local 25 stewards from Rich Products in Murfreesboro, Tenn. reviewed grievance procedures and health and safety guidelines.



▲ L. 25 stewards from the Rome, Ga. Kellogg's plant successfully completed the one-day education program that was led by L. 25 Bus. Agt./Fin. Secy. Jeff Webb and retired local union officer Larry Altman.



▲ L. 25 stewards from Rich Products in Murfreesboro, Tenn. sharpen their skills during a one-day seminar led by retired local union officer Larry Altman.



## Grand Central Bakery Workers JOIN LOCAL 114

**D**espite a vicious anti-union campaign, on December 12, workers at Grand Central Bakery in Portland, Ore. voted overwhelmingly to become members of BCTGM Local 114 (Portland, Ore.).

Driven by concerns about safety, understaffing, sexual harassment, and compensation, 45 bakers and dishwashers at Grand Central Baking Company's Northwest Portland wholesale bakery reached out to BCTGM Local 114.

In late November 2019, a majority of the workers signed cards seeking to join Local 114 and petitioned the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to schedule a union election.

Grand Central was founded in 1989 in Seattle and has grown to 12 retail locations and two wholesale bakeries in Portland and Seattle, employing about 400 workers. Grand Central bread is sold at Fred Meyer, QFC, Whole Foods, New Seasons Market, and other stores, and its buns are served at Burgerville, a Pacific-Northwest fast food chain.

Local 114 represents bakery workers at Franz, Kroger, Safeway and Bimbo/Oroweat, as well as bakery department workers at local grocery stores.

According to Local 114 Business Agent Alejandro Ahumada, who led the organizing effort, wages at the bakeries are far lower than union-represented bakers. In addition, workers say that opportunities for advancement and raises are limited; Complaints of sexual harassment have been poorly handled by management; and workers have no say over work rule

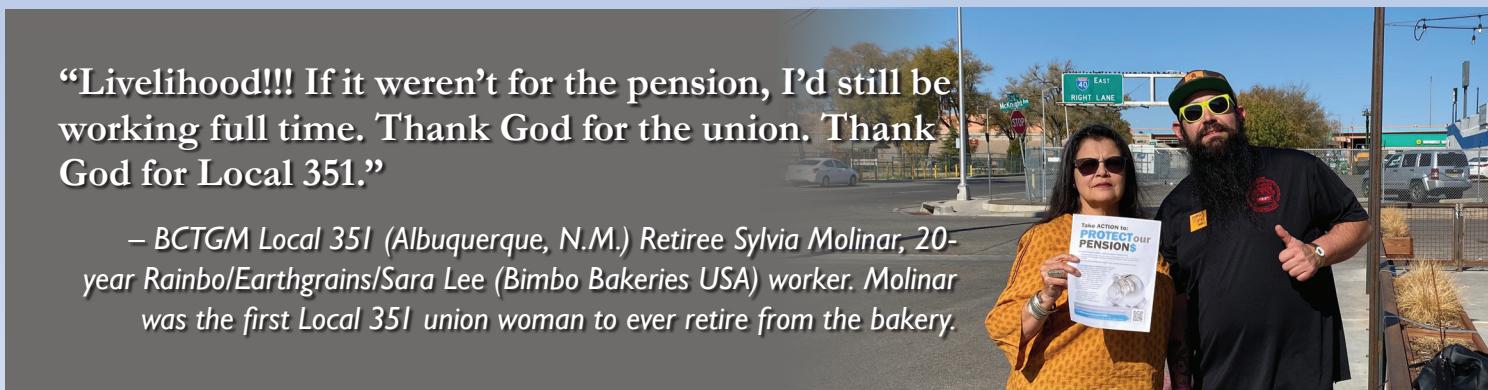
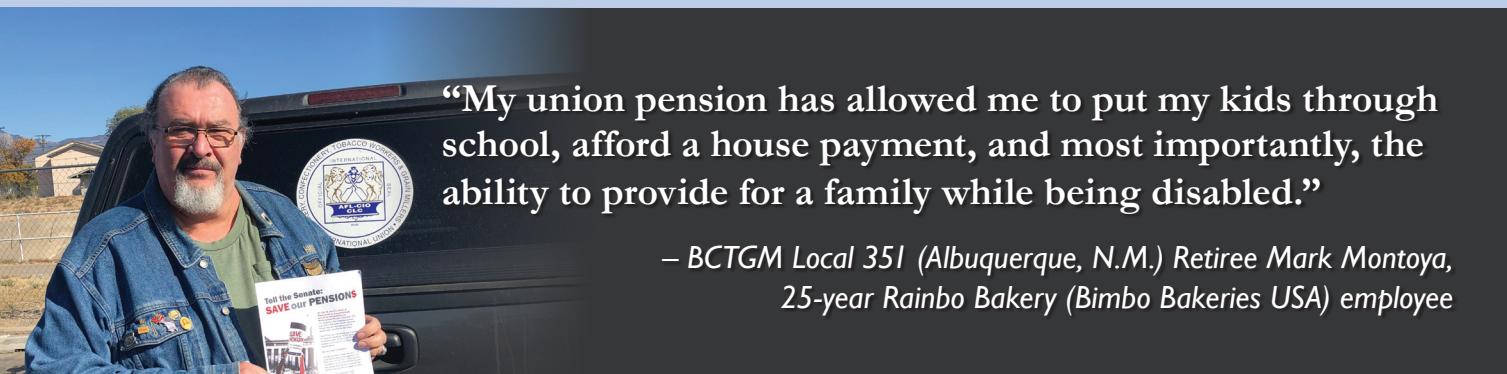
changes. Safety is also a big concern, says Ahumada. Workers use buckets to scoop a pre-ferment called poolish out of 500-pound mixing bowls, and that can lead to injuries.

The company did not welcome the attempt by workers to exercise their rights. While the organizing campaign launched at the busiest time of the year for the company, for four days, Grand Central Bakery managers pulled workers off the floor half a crew at a time for special meetings to try to talk them out of unionizing.

Despite it all, the workers stood strong and voted 29-to-9 to become members of BCTGM Local 114.



# Retired BCTGM Members Reflect on IMPORTANCE of their B&C Pension



## What Does Your B&C Pension Mean to YOU?

Send us your photo and a sentence or two explaining why your Union Pension is important and we'll publish your story in the BCTGM NEWS!

Mail to:

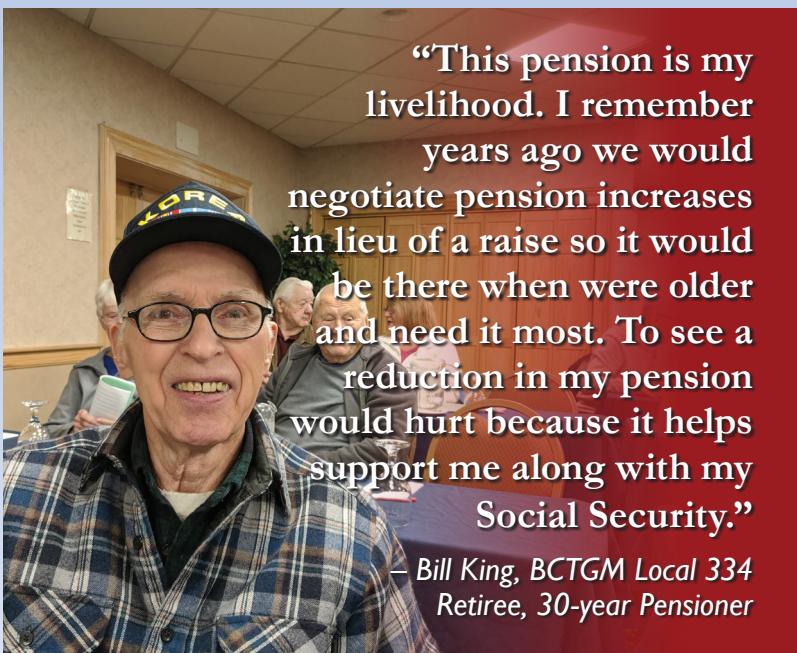
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BCTGM International Union  
4th Floor  
10401 Connecticut Avenue  
Kensington, Maryland 20895

Email: [cchristensen@BCTGM.org](mailto:cchristensen@BCTGM.org)



**“If the Senate does not approve the Butch Lewis Act, it will affect all Bakers Union retirees, and I do not deserve to live on less. It would be a disgrace after all the years I worked hard for my Pension, and I gave up wages for my Pension.”**

*— BCTGM Local 114 (Portland, Ore.) Retiree Daniel Berg,  
a 36-year Safeway Clackamas Bread plant worker.*

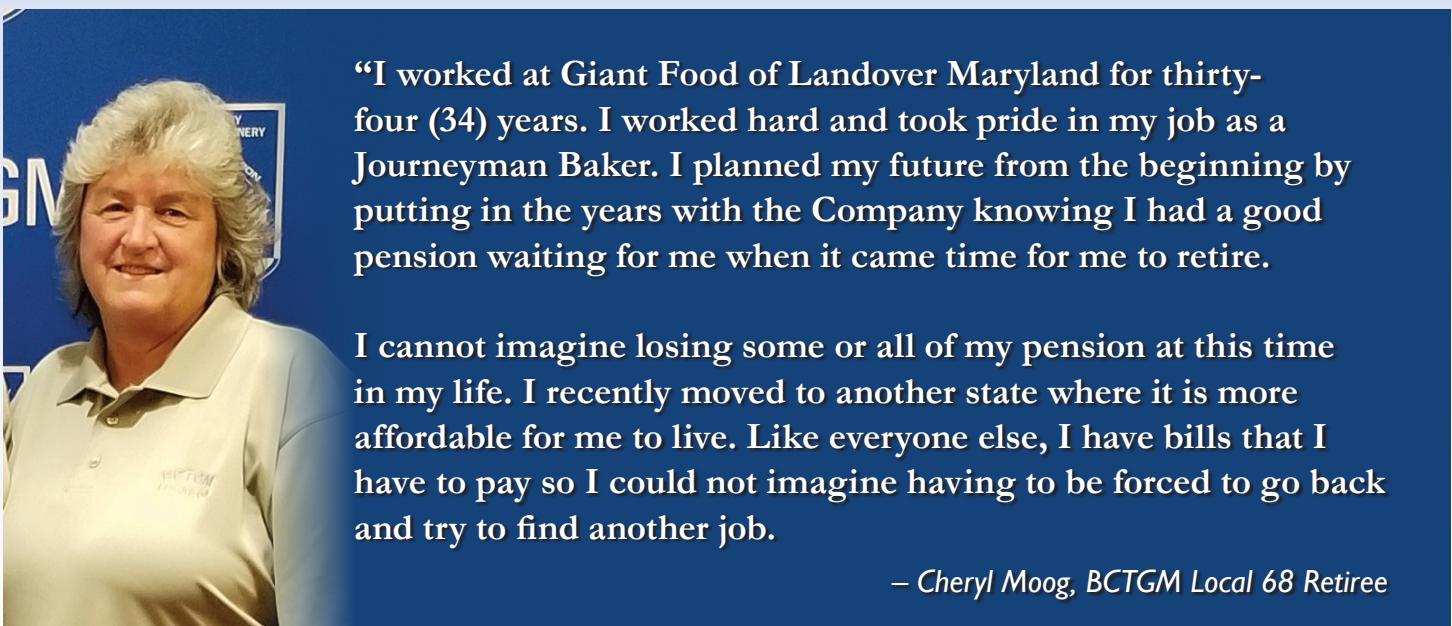


**“This pension is my livelihood. I remember years ago we would negotiate pension increases in lieu of a raise so it would be there when we’re older and need it most. To see a reduction in my pension would hurt because it helps support me along with my Social Security.”**

*— Bill King, BCTGM Local 334 Retiree, 30-year Pensioner*

**“My pension is very important to my life. It helps me pay for my mortgage and groceries. Mostly it makes me proud to be a union member.”**

*— Be Phan, BCTGM Local 334 Retiree*

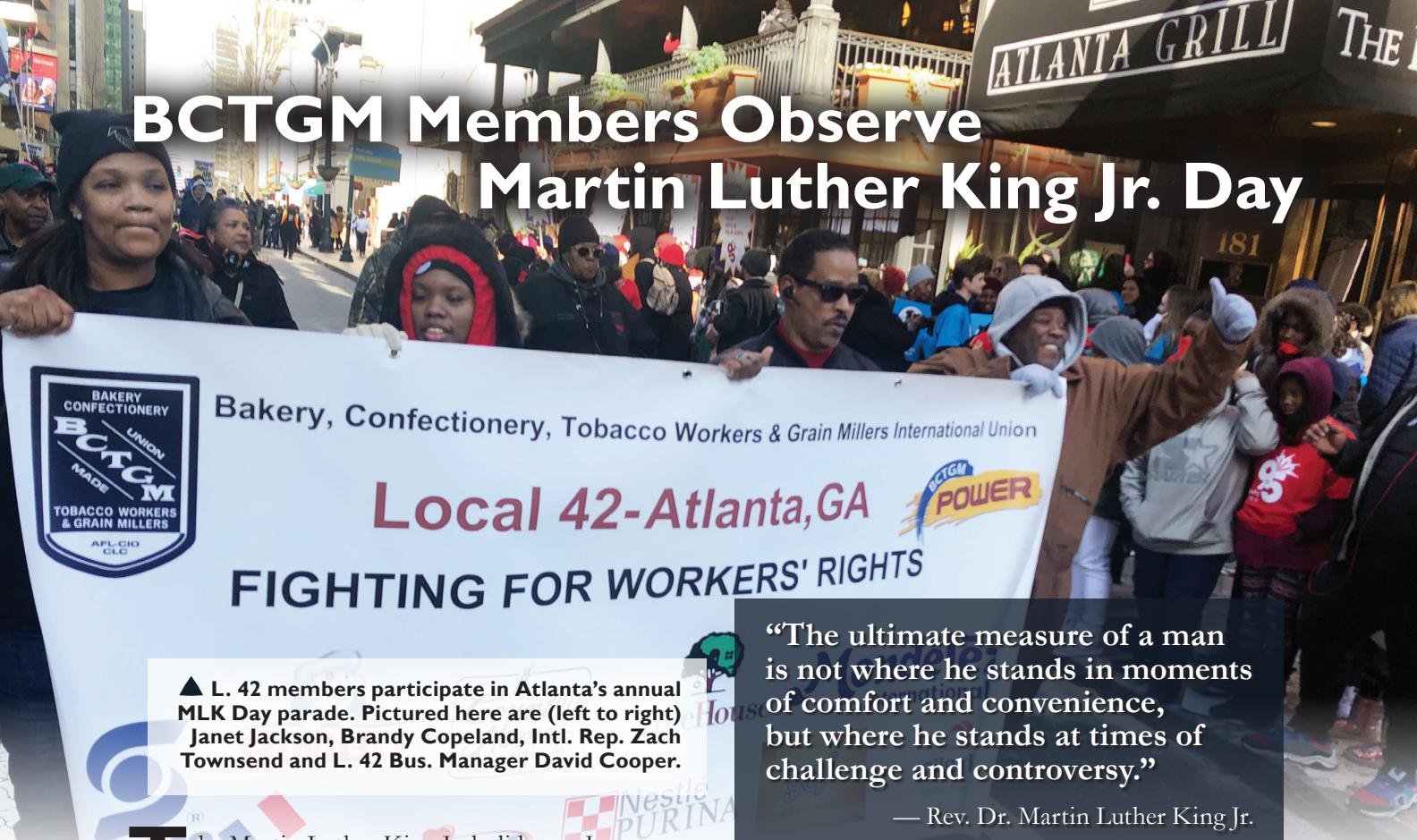


**“I worked at Giant Food of Landover Maryland for thirty-four (34) years. I worked hard and took pride in my job as a Journeyman Baker. I planned my future from the beginning by putting in the years with the Company knowing I had a good pension waiting for me when it came time for me to retire.**

**I cannot imagine losing some or all of my pension at this time in my life. I recently moved to another state where it is more affordable for me to live. Like everyone else, I have bills that I have to pay so I could not imagine having to be forced to go back and try to find another job.**

*— Cheryl Moog, BCTGM Local 68 Retiree*

# BCTGM Members Observe Martin Luther King Jr. Day



▲ L. 42 members participate in Atlanta's annual MLK Day parade. Pictured here are (left to right) Janet Jackson, Brandy Copeland, Intl. Rep. Zach Townsend and L. 42 Bus. Manager David Cooper.

The Martin Luther King Jr. holiday on January 20, 2020, marked the 25th anniversary of the day of service that celebrates the Civil Rights leader's life and legacy. Observed each year on the third Monday in January as "a day on, not a day off," MLK Day is the only federal holiday designated as a national day of service to encourage all Americans to volunteer to improve their communities.

For the MLK holiday, BCTGM members, once again, rose to the occasion and set the standard for how to commemorate the life and legacy of Dr. King.

International Representative Zach Townsend joined Local 42 officers and members in Atlanta for

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

— Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

the city's annual parade and MLK Day activities. On the coldest day of the year, the BCTGM delegation was among thousands of residents, union and community activists who turned out for city wide volunteer projects, church services, the King Center's annual parade and other MLK Day related events and programs.

In Greensboro, N.C., BCTGM Local 317T officers and members attended the Greensboro Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast. According to BCTGM International Representative Derrick Byrd, who also attended the annual breakfast, the event is held to honor Dr. King's contributions to human rights.



L. 317T officers and members at the Greensboro Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast held at the Koury Convention Center.



The King Center's annual MLK Day parade in Atlanta included thousands of union and community activists.

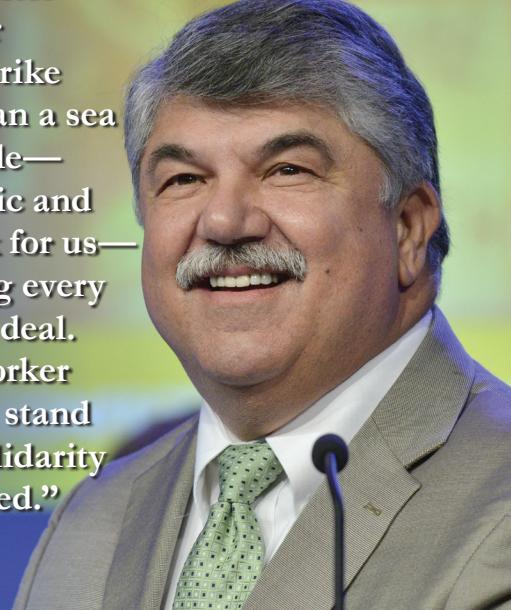
# NOTABLE *Quotes*

**“We didn’t get the N.L.R.A. without a massive crisis on the streets. That comes first. Then you get to change the rules.”**

—Jane McAlevey, union organizer and author of *A Collective Bargain*

**“In 2019, nearly half a million workers sacrificed the comforts of today for the progress of tomorrow. These strike statistics represent nothing less than a sea change in America. Working people—completely fed up with an economic and political system that does not work for us—are turning to each other and using every tool at our disposal to win a better deal. Because of the courage of every worker who said enough is enough, we all stand on a stronger foundation today. Solidarity works. And we’re just getting started.”**

—Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO President



**“Whether we’re talking about Black Lives Matter, the #MeToo and Times Up movements, the immigrant rights movement, or the fight for LGBTQ+ rights, every single one centers around justice for the working class. As Trade Unionists, we must never forget the intersectionality of our fights. We must understand and appreciate our interdependence on the broader fabric of organizations and individuals of conscience. Because corporations and the 1% want nothing more than to see us fighting, see us divided, and see us distracted.”**

—Graham Trainor, Oregon AFL-CIO President

**“When the history books are written, the story of this decade is that everyday people — sinking under the weight of a system rigged against us — realized no one was coming to bail us out and decided to do it ourselves. Most importantly we’ve remembered that no one truly succeeds alone, and we are acting from the understanding that the only real way to claim our fair share is through solidarity with one another.”**

—Sara Nelson, Association of Flight Attendants-CWA President

**“[It’s] people kind of looking around and saying, ‘Oh my God, we’re 10 years into this recovery. The unemployment rate is 3.6%. Why am I not seeing decent wage increases?’”**

—Heidi Shierholz,  
Economic Policy Institute  
Senior Economist and  
Director of Policy

# President's Budgets Go 0-for-4 for Retirees

by Richard Fiesta

**President Trump has now had four chances to deliver a budget that protects retirees, and each time he has proposed cruel cuts to the earned benefits that older Americans rely on.**

The latest budget would cut hundreds of billions of dollars from Medicare, even more from Medicaid, and more than \$70 billion from Social Security disability benefits.

Together these cuts will strip health care and basic income from millions. Over 10 years this will result in a loss of health coverage for 20 million people.

Defying logic, the budget request would even slash funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by almost 16 percent as the world grapples with the deadly coronavirus.

The president is wrong to target older Americans as he does in this budget. Retirees have paid for Medicare over a lifetime, and depend on it to stay healthy. The average Medicare beneficiary is already paying more than \$5,000 in out of pocket health care costs per year while the average Social Security retirement benefit is just \$16,656 per year.

Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (NV) recently questioned Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin about the budget. Secretary Mnuchin confirmed that the budget would indeed cut Social Security and Medicare, describing the cuts as "slowing the rate of increase," code words used by those who want to cut retirees' earned benefits. Not surprisingly, the Trump budget uses these cuts to give millionaires like Mnuchin another tax cut.

Hundreds of thousands of seniors depend on

Medicaid to pay for nursing homes and health care expenses. Nearly 2 in 3 nursing home residents receive care through Medicaid. Others rely on it to pay for home health care, mental health and therapy services, as well as durable medical equipment.

If the President were serious about cutting health care costs and strengthening Medicare, he would take action to help seniors afford their prescription drugs. The solution is staring him in the face. H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, was passed by the House of Representatives last year but President Trump promised to veto it. This bill would limit out of pocket drug costs for seniors to \$2,000 per year and require the government to negotiate lower prices for 250 high-priced prescription drugs, including insulin. The bill would save so much money that coverage for current and future seniors would be expanded to include hearing, dental and vision benefits.

A president's budget reflects their values. President Trump is raiding retirees' earned benefits to pay for the tax cuts he passed for the wealthiest Americans and profitable corporations. Every time he has had a chance to fight for older Americans he has not. The Alliance's 4.4 million members will work to make sure every senior understands the President's record, not just his tweets.



*Richard Fiesta is Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans. Previously he worked in both the executive and legislative branches of government, serving at the Departments of Labor and Interior as well as the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation. For more information, visit [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org).*



## Benefits for UNION Pets

Thinking about ways to reduce your pet expenses this year? Union members and their families can get the best care for their pets while easing the financial burden.

The Union Plus Pet Health Insurance program is powered by Pets Best. Pets Best offers plans to fit all budgets and coverage needs. Plus, union members get 10% off eligible plans and access to the Pet Helpline where a veterinary expert will answer your pet behavior questions 24/7.

Pets Best was founded by a veterinarian in 2005 and has paid more than \$125 million in pet insurance claims to pet parents.



### What is Pet Insurance?

Pet insurance reimburses you on your veterinary bills when your dog or cat gets sick or injured. Pet insurance helps you afford the best course of treatment, protects against major financial setbacks, and can give you peace of mind as a pet parent. Having a pet insurance plan allows you to focus on getting the best care for your pet without worrying about the financial burden.

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[unionplus.org/benefits/insurance/pet-health-insurance](http://unionplus.org/benefits/insurance/pet-health-insurance)**

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# Tell your Senators: **SAVE our PENSIONS!**

The Butch Lewis Act of 2019 (S. 2254) is vital legislation which strengthens pension plans and avoids retiree benefit cuts. It is crucial that BCTGM members are retirees contact their Senators and urge them to support S. 2254.



*“The BCTGM has placed the highest priority on preserving and strengthening our members’ pensions. Now, more than ever, BCTGM members in every one of our shops, together with our retirees, must remain united in solidarity and continue to raise our voices to the Senate. The fight to preserve BCTGM pensions is urgent and ongoing. We will never give up protecting the retirement security of every BCTGM member and retiree.”*

— **BCTGM International President David Durkee**

**This legislation is important to all BCTGM members with collectively bargained pensions!**

**Call your Senators and tell them to  
PROTECT Multiemployer Pension Plans**

**CALL 844-551-6921**